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ARAB STATES

The Arab summit conference held in Baghdad from 2 to 5 November to coordinate a response to Egyptian President Sadat's agreement to the Camp David accords ended in a compromise between Arab moderates and radicals. The summit's decisions, [redacted] are subject to wide interpretation and represent consensus views. Publicly, both moderates and hardliners are expressing satisfaction with the outcome.

The communique issued at the end of the conference was bland. The dangers of defection from "Arab ranks" were noted, but the communique stopped short of openly condemning Egyptian President Sadat. It voiced "non-approval" of the Camp David accords but asserted Arab support for a comprehensive peace settlement based on complete Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, including Jerusalem, and the creation of a Palestinian state. Annual Arab summits are to be held every November.

[redacted]

Agreement was also reached in principle to apply some symbolic sanctions against Egypt if and when it signs a peace treaty with Israel and exchanges ambassadors. The Arab boycott of Israel would be applied to any Egyptian firms or individuals who deal with Israel. Arab League headquarters would be removed from Cairo to another Arab capital—possibly Tunis, Damascus, Baghdad, or Kuwait—and Egypt's participation in the League suspended until Sadat returns to the "Arab camp."

No further sanctions were taken against Egypt despite the efforts of the Arab hardliners—led by Syria—to get the summit to agree to a complete break in diplomatic and economic ties. The moderates—led by Saudi Arabia—blunted these moves.

The summit's decisions will probably

not have any significant impact on the Egyptian economy since the conference did not call for an end to Arab financial support to Egypt. The Saudis, whose aid is vital to Sadat, seem willing to continue providing it despite the Camp David agreements.

The political damage to Sadat is mostly symbolic. Egypt becomes increasingly isolated in the Arab world. The Baghdad summit was the first major Arab meeting ever held without Egyptian representation, and the removal of Arab League headquarters from Cairo—if implemented—will further strengthen the image of an ostracized Egypt. While Sadat may encounter some domestic criticisms for this, it is not likely to alter his determination to conclude a peace treaty with Israel.



King Hussein of Jordan (left) and Sheikh Zayid (second from the left), President of the United Arab Emirates, at the Arab summit in Baghdad last week.

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